

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/01
Speaking

Key messages

For Teachers/examiners:

- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination (see below).
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section, but keep your own answers brief. A candidate cannot qualify for marks while the Examiner is speaking.
- More than one question per section is required for candidates to qualify for full marks for *Seeking Information* and Examiners should be prepared to prompt candidates for several questions to enable them to have access to the full range of marks.
- Candidates' questions should relate to the topic under discussion. Please see the Mark Scheme.
- Cover a range of topics (not a single topic) in the General Conversation, some in depth, vary questions and topics from one candidate to another, be prepared to identify and follow the interests and passions of the candidate (not your own), and keep your own contributions to a minimum.
- Create as natural a conversation as possible, interact with the candidate and avoid lists of pre-prepared questions, especially those which elicit one-word or purely factual answers.
- Avoid topics of a highly personal or sensitive nature.
- Ask questions at an appropriate level and avoid IGCSE-type questions except as openers to fuller discussion.
- It is the Examiner's responsibility to introduce the candidate at the beginning of the examination, not the candidate's.
- It is not helpful to use 'Maintenant, présente-toi...' as an opener for the General Conversation, as this tends to restrict discussion to a very narrow range of subjects.

For candidates:

- Make sure that the presentation is not just factual, but contains ideas and opinions and also allows further discussion in the Topic Conversation.
- Ask questions of the Examiner in both conversation sections and make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion in order to qualify for the full range of marks. Make sure your questions are relevant to the topic under discussion.
- Remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society: *The presentation must demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken*. This must be more than a passing reference, and candidates who live in a francophone country and who speak about an aspect of their own culture must make it clear beyond doubt to which country they are referring.
- Candidates are advised that it is better not to ask the Examiner direct questions during the Topic Presentation, as they disrupt the flow of the Presentation and do not count towards *Seeking Information* in the conversation sections.
- A number of candidates asked rhetorical questions in the Topic Presentation. Rhetorical questions are not a requirement of the Test, but they may constitute, if desired, an appropriate part of the Presentation. However, candidates should be aware that they do not count towards *Seeking Information* in the conversation sections.
- It is not in the spirit of the Test that candidates ask their Examiner for key (or indeed *any*) vocabulary.

General comments

It is important for Examiners to remember that this examination is an opportunity for candidates to show what they have learnt and a chance for them to express and develop their own ideas and opinions. Examiners should see their role as providing and facilitating this opportunity.

The way in which an Examiner asks questions can make a significant difference to how a candidate is able to respond. Examiners need to be aware that:

- Very long, complex questions tend to unnerve candidates and rarely facilitate discussion.
- Closed questions usually elicit short answers, sometimes just yes or no, and should be avoided unless they are intended to open the way for a deeper discussion.
- Open questions such as *Comment?* or *Pourquoi?* are more likely to allow a candidate the freedom to answer at much greater length and in greater depth.

The examination should be a conversation, which can only be achieved by engaging with and responding to what the candidate says, not by asking a series of entirely unrelated questions with no follow-up. Going through a list of pre-prepared questions rarely results in a natural conversation.

Administration

Recordings

- Recordings were mainly clear, though there are still examples of faulty recording equipment. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the Examiner's own contribution.
- Please choose a room which is quiet and where candidates are not distracted by external noise.
- Only the Examiner and the candidate should be present during the Test.
- Centres should keep a copy of the recording(s) in case a second copy is required by the Moderator or a broader range of marks is requested.
- Please make sure that the recordings have successfully transferred to the CD or memory stick submitted for moderation. We receive blank or distorted disks every year.
- Where centres use digital recording software, each candidate's file must be saved individually, as .mp files, and finalised correctly, so that each candidate's examination can be accessed for moderation. Files should be identified using precise candidate details (see the paragraph below) rather than just 'number 1, 2' etc.
- Please ensure that all recording material (including CD cases) is labelled with details of the centre, syllabus, and candidates, listed with their full names and candidate numbers in the order of recording. Where a centre has candidates at both A & AS level, they should be recorded on separate CDs.
- Centres are reminded that the sample of recordings they send should represent candidates throughout the range of the entry, from highest to lowest.
- Please avoid sticky tape or labels coming into contact with the recording side of CDs, as this makes them unplayable and runs the risk of damaging the equipment on which they are played.

Paperwork

- There are always a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transferring them to the MS1. These should be checked carefully before submission and all paperwork enclosed with the recordings. For the size of sample needed, please see the details on the Cambridge International website.
- Centres are reminded that for moderation, in addition to the recordings, they need to send the Working Mark Sheet, a copy of the MS1 (computer mark sheet or equivalent), and any other relevant paperwork.

Application of Mark Scheme

- There were irregularities in the application of the Mark Scheme. Several centres awarded marks out of 10 for *Providing* and/or *Seeking Opinions*, when the maximum is 5; others awarded marks for *Seeking Information*, even when the candidate had not asked any questions.
- Many Examiners do not halve the mark for *Presentation/Content* if the candidate's topic is not demonstrably and unequivocally related to a francophone country.

- Where a centre engages two Examiners to examine the same syllabus, Examiners must make sure they apply the standard in the same way (i.e. they go through Internal coordination) before they submit their marks to Cambridge International.

Format of the examination

There are 3 distinct parts to the Speaking Test:

1. Presentation (3–3.5 minutes)
2. Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes)
3. General Conversation (8–9 minutes)

The Speaking Test should last no more than 20 minutes in total.

In order to be fair to all candidates across the world, these timings should be observed. Where examinations are too short, candidates are not given opportunities to show what they can do, and where conversations are over-extended, an element of fatigue creeps in and candidates sometimes struggle to maintain their concentration and level of language.

Examiners must also remember that the longer their own contributions, the less time candidates have to develop their ideas. Responses to questions asked by candidates should be kept brief.

Presentation (3–3.5 minutes)

In this part of the examination, the candidate gives a **single** presentation on a specific topic of his or her choice, taken from one of the topic areas listed in the syllabus booklet. This is the only prepared part of the examination and the only part for which candidates are able to choose what they want to talk about. There were a number of cases this session where candidates spoke on more than one topic.

The topic list gives candidates a very wide choice – the most popular this year, at both A and AS Levels, were *La Pandémie, La Technologie, L'égalité des sexes, Les Médias Sociaux, Le Conflit des Générations, Le Sport, La Famille, Le Tourisme, La Cuisine Française, L'environnement* and *La Pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage and discrimination, a few dealing with culture or politics in a French-speaking country, as well as personal interests such as art or music. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues. It was noticeable that the link to a francophone country was often borderline.

For the most part, candidates were clearly aware of the need, stated in the syllabus, that the presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken. Where this is not the case, candidates will have their mark for *Content/Presentation* halved (see Speaking Test mark scheme) by the Examiner.

Since the topic is chosen beforehand, candidates have usually researched quite widely, and have to select and structure their material to fit into 3 to 3.5 minutes – additional material which cannot be included in the actual presentation because of the time constraint may well prove very useful in the topic conversation section. In general, candidates had no problem speaking for the required time and many were able to give full and interesting presentations.

Candidates would be well advised to steer clear of very factual subjects e.g. *La Famille* and *Le Sport*. The mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to score well, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice and consider whether it will be possible to develop and expand their chosen topic. Sport and family, though popular choices, are often the least successful for that reason.

Increasingly, candidates spend time giving dictionary definitions of very familiar topics at the expense of expressing their own ideas and opinions.

Candidates should only present ONE topic and the Topic Conversation which follows will seek to develop that same topic.

Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes)

In this section, candidates have the chance to expand on what they have already said and develop ideas and opinions expressed briefly during the presentation. Examiners need to beware of merely asking questions which allow a repetition of the same material already offered – their aim should be to ask more probing questions in order to give candidates opportunities to expand on their original statements and then respond to what the candidate says. There are not necessarily ‘right’ answers either here or in the General Conversation section and it is in the nature of a genuine conversation that those taking part may not agree with opinions expressed. However, differences of opinion can create lively debate (if handled sensitively and purposefully by the Examiner) and can give candidates the opportunity to defend their point of view.

At both A and AS Level, questions should go beyond the sort of questions appropriate at IGCSE Level. Candidates need to be able to show that they are capable of taking part in a mature conversation. In some cases, candidates were not able to offer much development or sustain the level of language used in their presentation, but others were successful in expressing additional ideas and seeking the opinions of the Examiner.

In each conversation section there are 5 marks available for questions the candidates ask of the Examiner: they should ask more than one question in each conversation section and Examiners must prompt them to do so. Examiners should make sure that they do not spend too long on their own answers to candidates’ questions, thereby depriving candidates of valuable time.

Examiners should indicate the end of the Topic Conversation and the beginning of the General Conversation.

General Conversation (8–9 minutes)

The General Conversation is the most spontaneous section of the examination. Candidates will have prepared their own choice of topic for the Topic Presentation (to be continued in the Topic Conversation), but here they do not know what the Examiner will choose to discuss (and it is the Examiner who chooses, not the candidate). Clearly the areas of discussion will be those studied during the course, but there seemed to be fewer varied and in-depth discussions this session. In a centre with a number of candidates, candidates should not all be asked to talk about the same list of subjects – themes should be varied from candidate to candidate and should on no account return to the original subject of the presentation.

This section is intended to be a conversation between Examiner and candidate, so it is not appropriate for the Examiner to ask a series of unrelated questions, to which the candidate responds with a prepared answer, after which the Examiner moves on to the next question on the list! Examiners should display sensitivity in asking questions about topics of a personal nature i.e. religion and personal relationships and should try to keep their questions general rather than moving inappropriately into personal areas. Examiners should not regard the examination as a platform for imposing their own views on the candidates.

Examiners should aim to discuss a minimum of 2 to 3 areas in depth, giving candidates opportunities to offer their own opinions and defend them in discussion. Although the section may begin with straightforward questions about family, interests or future plans, which can, in themselves, be developed beyond the purely factual (questions asking ‘Why?’ or ‘How?’ are useful here), candidates at both A and AS Level should be prepared for the conversation to move on to current affairs and more abstract topics appropriate to this level of examination.

Candidates should be prompted to ask questions of the Examiner in order to give them the opportunity to score marks for this criterion, though Examiners should once again be wary of answering at too great a length.

Assessment

- The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where Topic Presentations did not relate to a francophone country, in which case the mark for Content/Presentation must be halved.
- A handful of Examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness, Accuracy and Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.

- In rare cases, Examiners misapplied the mark scheme, most frequently by awarding marks out of 10 for those categories like *Pronunciation/Intonation* and *Seeking Opinions* which carry a maximum of 5 marks.
- Examiners at centres with a large entry of able candidates should be aware that marks may be bunched and that it may be impossible to differentiate between candidates to a greater degree than the Mark Scheme allows.
- Where candidates ask questions to elicit clarification or obtain information during the course of conversation, they should clearly be rewarded, but Examiners must remember to prompt candidates in both conversation sections – the mark scheme gives the criteria for awarding marks for this element of the examination and these marks should be awarded regardless of whether questions are spontaneous or prompted, provided that they are relevant to the topic under discussion. A significant number of candidates this session had prepared questions which were not relevant.
- Centres are reminded that they should engage only one Examiner per syllabus if at all possible / if the size of the entry permits. In cases where the engagement of two or more Examiners on the same syllabus is unavoidable, the Examiners must co-ordinate with each other to establish an agreed standard.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/21
Reading and Writing

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8682/22 Reading and Writing</p>
--

Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. Candidates need to find a satisfactory replacement both semantically and grammatically.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not begin the answer by re-working the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material over the word limit is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, broadly similar in level of difficulty to previous years and on a topic which was generally approachable. There was the usual very wide range of performance, with some very good scripts from able and well-prepared candidates who demonstrated a high level of understanding of the texts and handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst at the other end of the range, there were some whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

Some didn't read the questions carefully enough or didn't take note of the indication in square brackets of the number of points to be made in each question, but where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**, or because they allowed their personal opinions to dictate their responses, rather than focusing on what the text actually said.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible. Some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and over-complicate their answers. Sometimes, the words of the text can be replaced by much simpler terms e.g. *le temps* or *la météo* for *les conditions météorologiques* (**3c**); or *le bruit* for *les émissions sonores* (**3e**). The most successful answers are often the most concisely and simply expressed. Some quite acceptably set out their answers by separating the points as **(i)**..., **(ii)**..., **(iii)**... etc.

Too many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language marks – e.g. *La limitation pénaliserait-elle ceux qui...* (**4b**). Answers beginning with *Parce que* or *En* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished significantly in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide a rewardable answer. They should try to

express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

In **Question 1**, most candidates appear to be aware of the need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing. The inclusion of unnecessary additional words (or the exclusion of necessary ones) invalidates the answer.

Candidates can sometimes help themselves considerably by narrowing down the options to words which are at least same parts of speech, or by matching (for example) singulars with singulars or feminine adjectives with feminine adjectives.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary. **Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible.** They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections: 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond the word limit is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, some candidates still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (maybe because of different practices in other subjects), but some simply waste a significant proportion of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined in correct French to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a relatively straightforward first exercise which enabled a good proportion of candidates a positive start:

In **Item (a)** *opposés* was generally identified for *hostiles*, helped perhaps by the plural endings, although *la mise* and *l'unanimité* made occasional unexplained appearances.

In **(b)**, *l'unanimité* appeared again, but it was the omission of *en* before *colère* which was the main cause of mark loss here – see the 'footprint' principle in **General comments Question 1** above.

Item (c) frequently produced *lancement*, which might perhaps have been possible in some contexts, but sadly not in this one.

In **(d)**, candidates were generally successful in finding *nets* for *clairs*.

In **(e)**, the same went for *sensible/délicat*, which made this the most successfully handled item of all.

Question 2

There were some excellent answers to this question from the strongest candidates, but, as usual, the task proved very demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or those who didn't observe the basic rules of agreement.

Item 2(a) The transfer into the passive proved problematic for some, occasionally because of an unnecessary change of tense or the insertion of *par nous*, but far more often because of the missed agreement on *vues* – or occasionally *ont été vu*.

In **Item 2(b)**, many seemed to realise the need for a subjunctive but not all could form one for the regular *-ir* verb *applaudir*. *Il faudrait que nous soyons en mesure d'applaudir* added a new and unrewardable twist.

Item 2(c) the transfer to direct speech required more than one change. By far the most common error here in was the omission of the *e* in *encourageons* or its inclusion in *encourageions*, but problems were also caused by the appearance of *notre membres* and *les soutenir*.

Item 2(d) A small number of candidates appeared to see this exercise as one which largely involved simply re-arranging the order of the words given: *Une distance de freinage réduite par une baisse permet*. The need for an agreement on *permise* was often missed.

In **Item 2(e)** A combination of a missing agreement on *forcés* and a failure to follow it with *de* rather than *à* accounted for the mark being lost by many.

Question 3

In **Item 3(a)**, a good number of candidates successfully identified the lowering of the speed limit for the first mark. Some went on to say *Ils se sont fâchés/ont manifesté leur colère* which did not say how they showed their opposition, whilst others simply lifted the noun *lancement* which was easily avoided by others using *en lançant/publiant/ils ont créé* etc.

In **Item 3(b)**, the wording of the question directed candidates towards replacing the nouns with verbs – *Qu'est-ce que les gouvernements ... ont fait?* – which many did with some ease. Most pointed successfully to the introduction of pedestrian precincts and speed traps.

In **Item 3(c)**, the need to remain *vigilant/attentif* was identified by most. *Regarder les pneus* was too vague to score but most found *vérifier/contrôler/entretenir* or similar. Fewer found simple phrases such as *adapter sa conduite s'il fait mauvais temps* for the third mark.

In **Item 3(d)** quite a number did not read through to the end of the question, which asked what the association was seeking to do by asking its members to respect the limit and drive more slowly, and simply

answered *respecter la limitation* or *rouler moins vite*. Candidates needed to point firstly to the aim of reducing the number of people injured/injuries and then the seriousness of the injuries. *Fatalités/morts* went too far. Some found neat ways of combining both in a single sentence: *réduire le nombre et la gravité des blessures*.

Item 3(e) saw some confusion over *économie* which some thought referred to the benefit for the country's economy or reducing the price of petrol, but most realised that it referred to using/buying less petrol, which in turn reduces air pollution. Relatively few managed to avoid lifting *émissions sonores*, easily achieved by *bruit*.

Section 2

Question 4

Item 4(a) Misreading *état* as *étant* distorted some responses. The remaining three causes were generally well handled.

In **Item 4(b)**, there was sometimes a lack of clarity over whether the journeys would increase in distance rather than in the length of time taken, but a healthy number earned both marks neatly and simply with *Les trajets et les livraisons prendraient plus de temps*.

Item 4(c) was well answered by those who saw the need for verbs to avoid lifting, although neither *faire mieux* nor *faire clair* worked here.

In **Item 4(d)**, some thought reducing the speed had a very positive effect on air quality, which was probably what they imagined rather than what the text actually said, which was the contrary. Others went too far in the opposite direction by asserting that *il n'y aurait aucun/pas d'effet/zero*.

In **Item 4(e)**, *réévaluer/réexaminer le projet* etc. earned most candidates the first mark, but *faire marche arrière* gave rise to some confusion.

Question 5(a) Summary

This Question is effectively a **précis** in which being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information **without a general introduction**. *La décision prise par le gouvernement français en 2018 de réduire la vitesse maximale de 90 km/h à 80 km/h sur les routes secondaires divise le peuple français. En effet cette décision aura des conséquences positifs et négatifs. Les associations de prévention routière sont d'accords avec cette décision* wasted approximately one third of the word allowance without scoring any marks. Significantly fewer words could have been used to score all 7 of the marks available in favour of lowering the speed limit: *En réduisant la vitesse, on diminue le nombre d'accidents routiers (A) et leur gravité. (B). On peut s'arrêter plus vite (C) et réduire les chocs (D). Les voitures consomment moins d'essence (E) et produisent moins d'émissions polluantes (F) et de bruit (G).*

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a respectable number. The very weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

Of the arguments against the lowering of the speed limit, the most commonly made included

- It is just a way to generate income for the State.
- There are many other factors which cause accidents.
- Journey and delivery times increase.
- The money spent on replacing speed signs would be better spent on other projects.
- The impact on air pollution is minimal.

The **Personal Response (5b)** elicited a large number of proposals for limiting the number of cars on the roads, many of which centred on improving cheap and reliable public transport. The question did not ask why we should reduce the number of cars on the road, but how?

Other ideas included:

- Limiting car ownership to one per household.

- Car sharing – *co-voiturage*.
- Fixing the minimum driving age at 25 and the maximum at 70.
- Increasing the price of cars and/or fuel and/or road tax.
- Building more cycle paths to promote bicycles/scooters.
- Introducing congestion charges and closing car parks in cities.
- Using drones for deliveries.
- Alternating days for car use.
- Planning towns so that the major facilities can be reached on foot.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from the virtually flawless to the very poor. The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a robust control of structure. At the other end of the scale, the very weakest struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

A phonetic approach to spelling sometimes made compréhension difficult: *un nôtre/anotre (un autre); les décets (décès); plus d'amandes*. But it extended to grammar too (*ils on-t-été vues; quand l'ont roule*) or to the choice between *ce, se, and ceux; sa and ça; ces, ses, c'est and s'est; ci and si; donc and dont; ou and où*, many of which appeared largely interchangeable. The use of the infinitive *-er* ending – or indeed anything else that sounded similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (*-é*) in some scripts.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) were again largely ignored in a worryingly large number of scripts. As with the frequency with which words given in the text and/or question were wrongly copied or changed their spelling and gender from one sentence to the next, it is tempting to put this down to carelessness and lack of checking but one suspects that the problem may in some cases lie much deeper than this.

When attempts were made to make verbs agree as plurals, it was often simply by putting an *s* on the end of the singular: *ils utilises*.

Many incorrect verb forms were in evidence, even for common irregular verbs such as *pouvoir, faire, devoir, prendre, (per)mettre, (entre/main)tenir*.

Constructions with certain verbs seemed problematic: *encourager, persuader, aider, permettre, interdire, obliger*. Attempts at forming passives also seemed challenging, sometimes because candidates confused *ils ont* with *ils sont*, or else did not understand the implications for the agreement of the past participle.

English verbs with French endings were much in evidence – *vérifier, émettre, consumer, livraiser, entretenir/entretir, éclairager, expecter, exprimer, introducer/introduiser, diminuer/dimunier/diminuire, réduire*.

Studying vocabulary in lexical groups would be useful preparation for this examination.

Other words with an obvious English influence were: *les régulations, les polluants, duration, diminution, bénéficitive, en ordre pour, payer attention, ils sont sur le telephone*.

Stronger candidates showed commendable awareness of the need to avoid 'lifting' from the text, for example by replacing a noun with a verb, but they still need to be sure to follow things through: for example, the laudable attempt to replace *la réduction de la vitesse* by *il a réduit de la vitesse* does not work and shows that the candidate has not fully understood the text or what (s)he is writing. The same is true of attempts to replace *le lancement de pétitions* by *ils ont lancé de pétitions*; or *le port de la ceinture* by *porter de la ceinture etc.*

Although much of the above inevitably focuses on weaknesses and areas for improvement, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the strongest candidates wrote very impressive, idiomatic, fluent and commendably accurate French which was very much to their credit.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should **not** begin the answer by writing out the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material over the word limit is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

The paper was felt to be broadly comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years. There were some very good scripts from candidates who were well versed in handling the various tasks, but there some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence and knowledge was stretched by what was being asked of them.

Candidates usually appeared familiar with the format of the paper and knew how to tackle the different types of question. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy. Most of the questions on this paper could be answered in short sentences containing straightforward grammar and vocabulary, but some candidates still neglect the simple answer and over-complicate their answers.

Some candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract from the overall Quality of Language mark – e.g. **(3e)**: *Certains scientifiques soulèvent-ils le problème parce que...* **(4f)**: *Le caoutchouc recyclé est-il particulièrement adapté parce que...* Answers beginning with *parce que* and *en* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates are advised to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent series, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks at this level. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

In **Question 1**, most candidates appear aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the ‘footprint’ of the word or words which they are replacing.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections: 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond the word limit is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, some candidates still write answers in excess of the word limit, meaning that many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (maybe because of different practices in other subjects). The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé/précis* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

One example among many: *Nous vivons dans un monde où l'amélioration d'environnement est un besoin grâce à l'augment de gaspillage produite par les humains. Pour combattre l'inondation des polluants...* Then starting **5(b)** with *Il est vrai que un thème brûlant d'actualité est celui de pollution de l'air. Si je voudrais réduire mon impact écologique personnelle....* This scores no marks but merely uses up approximately one third of the word limit, not to mention doing little for the Quality of Language mark either.

Other candidates made the same point several times or went into unnecessary detail.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined in correct French to another in any way: therefore, *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Choosing words which did not appear in the first two paragraphs (as required by the rubric) – or indeed anywhere else in the text – did not help some candidates' chances. Candidates would also be well advised to narrow down the choice by identifying the part of speech involved, or at least making sure that a plural is replaced by a plural, for example.

In **Item (a)**, the very common *remarqué* and *né* at least had the merit of being past participles even if they made no sense in this context. Other choices included *belge*, *plongeant* or *célèbre*.

In **Item (b)**, finding a synonym for *épouvantable* proved difficult for some who offered *omniprésence*, *absolu*, *ambitieux*, *formidable* or *absolu* in its stead.

In **Item (c)**, *ému* proved elusive for some; *nommé*, *affreux*, *remarqué* and *malgré* all being suggested.

In **Item (d)**, the meaning of *en dépit de* proved to be challenging for a number of candidates. One suspected that the attraction of *à partir de*, *pas moins de* and *le lancement de* was their inclusion of *de*, but the choice of *vise*, *qui flottent*, *à la surface*, *à but* and *en plastique* appeared largely random.

In **Item (e)**, *nocifs* generated *véritable*, *formidable*, *marines* and *déchets* but was the most successfully handled question here.

Question 2

There were some good answers to this question, but, as usual, the task proved quite demanding for those with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or those who didn't observe the basic rules of agreement.

Item 2(a) yielded a fair number of correct answers involving a straightforward transformation from passive to active, but some did not see the need to remove the agreement on *conçues*.

In **Item 2(b)**, the *après avoir* construction appeared unfamiliar territory to many who simply reproduced *plusieurs tests réalisés*. Some, who started promisingly, left the agreement on *réalisés* or invalidated things with *réaliser*.

Item 2(c), the change to direct speech required two manipulations, one to *moi* and the other to a first person plural verb. Some candidates who got this far sometimes rendered it incorrect with an otiose *e* in *encourageions*.

Item 2(d) proved the most problematic. Some thought that simply changing the word order would suffice: *Les plastiques apportés retiendrait(en)t cette barrière*. Others altered the tense unnecessarily, whilst some struggled to find the past participle of *retenir* (*retiendrés*; *retiendu* etc.)

Item 2(e) was perhaps the most successfully answered of all, with a commendable number recognising the need for a subjunctive, even if some incorrectly offered *se fâche* or *critiqué*.

Question 3

(a) Candidates needed to start by mentioning that it was plastic in the sea that shocked the young Édouard, as well as the lack of marine life. *Rien d'animaux* was not rewardable, nor was *peu/pas beaucoup* for *manque absolu*. Most understood Édouard's motivation for cleaning-up the oceans, which earned the third mark.

(b) Édouard's founding of *Océans propres* and its purpose were widely identified, and the concept of *à but non lucratif* was often successfully re-phrased. A fair number thought that Édouard was aiming to make a profit from his venture, while others occasionally invalidated their answer with (*Aucun*) *personne ne profite pas*. *Récuper* and *recouper* were both common.

- (c) There were three elements to explain here: the original idea of a single massively long barrier; its replacement by many more much smaller structures; the fact that these would bend and flex with the ocean currents. There was an occasional misunderstanding suggesting that the shorter versions would be placed a kilometre or two apart.
- (d) A good number identified the removal of the collected plastic on boats which would then take it to be recycled, but *plantes* and *locations de recyclage* occasionally caused difficulties.
- (e) Most candidates understood the principle of some plastic particles being too small to be caught, and the consequential danger of being absorbed by marine life.
- (f) Isabelle Fontenay's description of Édouard as being innovative and/or a role model for others was often well expressed. Some predictions that the project would remove 50 per cent of all plastic from all seas in the space of five years went well beyond the level suggested in the text.

Section 2

Question 4

Item 4(a) yielded a good number of successful responses. The first mark was sometimes lost by those who did not mention where the tyres could not be disposed of – *dans la nature; en plein air*. Many did not take the direction in the question towards a verb (*Qu'est-ce qu'on ne pouvait plus faire...?*) and lifted the nouns from the text unaltered.

Item 4(b) was often simply and correctly answered by using the verb *fermer*.

In **Item 4(c)**, candidates needed make it clear that companies now had to take responsibility for disposing of tyres which are worn-out. Not all who answered the first part correctly found the companies' response of coming together to establish *Récupneus*.

In **Item 4(d)**, as suggested by the question ... *permet de faire?*, the verbs *supprimer* and *recycler* offered the simplest way of avoiding lifting the corresponding nouns from the text.

Item 4(e) was quite well answered, with those for whom *trier* was unfamiliar often opting for acceptable alternatives here (e.g. *inspecter, examiner*). Re-sale was successfully identified by those who resisted *reventer*.

In **Item 4(f)**, a good number clearly understood the advantages although *dismunier/dimинуater, entretenir, fabricater/fabricser* obscured some of their responses.

Question 5

(a) Summary

See **General Comments** earlier for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which candidates often managed a good number. Some of the weaker candidates simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, likely hoping to randomly chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified initiatives included:

- Removal of plastic from the sea.
- Putting in place a single very long barrier or several shorter ones to achieve this.
- Plastic being taken away on boats...
- ... to be recycled
- Legislation concerning disposal of used tyres.
- Collection/resale/recycling of used tyres.
- Incineration of used tyres as a source of energy.
- Rubber used on artificial sports pitches/playgrounds.
- Rubber used to make other items.

Some candidates included their own opinions on the merits of ecological measures in general, which were not relevant to the summary task in hand.

(b) Personal Response

This part of the question asked what candidates could do to reduce their own ecological impact. A small number unfortunately ignored the instruction not to mention plastic or rubber, but there were plenty of sensible suggestions offered here, many focusing on reducing fossil fuels. Others highlighted the more personal elements of taking shorter showers, switching lights off, refusing meat, using public transport, going by bike or on foot, buying locally, using natural fabrics.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good to very poor. The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a commendable control of structure. The weakest struggled with the basic nuts and bolts of the language, which inevitably limited their ability to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively.

This was particularly in evidence in the agreement (or lack of it) of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural), which appeared largely random in a number of scripts. Some of the weaker candidates seemed to be unaware of the need to make any agreements whatsoever.

There was difficulty in forming passives: *Édouard a choqué des déchets dans ma mer*. Conjugating verbs such as *tenir/retenir/entretenir*, *disparaître*, *recupérer* proved taxing and constructions following other common verbs also caused their usual problems: *aider*, *permettre*, *demander*, *interdire*.

The approach to spelling was in many cases phonetic, and often heavily influenced by English: *les factories*, *le nécessairement*, *la disparité (disparition)*, *secrétives*, *les pièces de gaspillage*, *le jeune homme's optimisme*. Many English verbs with French endings were also in evidence: *improver*, *producer*, *envoyager*, *assesser*, *fabricer/fabricater*, *suppresser*, *resolver*, *innover*, *éliminer*, *nettoyager*, *lancemer*, *disparer*, *triger/triager*, *utiler*, *incinérer*.

Studying vocabulary in lexical groups would be useful preparation for this examination.

Stronger candidates showed commendable awareness of the need to avoid 'lifting' from the text, for example by replacing a noun with a verb, but they still need to be sure to follow things through: for example, offering *ils ont placé d'une barrière* instead of *le placement d'une barrière* does not work. The same is true of attempts at replacing *la création de Récupneus* by *Ils ont créé de Récupneus*; or *la diminution du risque* by *Il diminue du risque*.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/31
Essay

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8682/32 Essay</p>
--

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read the questions carefully and take sufficient time to plan their essays before starting to write. They then need to create logical, well-illustrated answers on the actual question set. Candidates should use the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title with all its elements and the conclusion to show their considered final judgement of the issues they have discussed. Paragraphing is also important to show both clarity of thought and logical progression through an argument. In order to attain high marks for language, candidates should use accurate and idiomatic French which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary.

General comments

There was a wide range of ability demonstrated, from the very weak to the very good. Content marks reflected the level of discussion which was often quite superficial or unfocused. There were, however, very few wholly irrelevant answers. Some relevant essays lacked clear development or exemplification of points. They were, therefore, unconvincing and unable to access the higher mark ranges.

The candidates' work was generally well presented although there were some examples of poor handwriting. Some candidates, due to insufficient planning, made excessive numbers of untidy revisions in the text of the essay, often hindering the Examiner's ability to follow an argument.

Most candidates organised their ideas into paragraphs and were able to communicate their ideas. Many showed ambition in their use of language and tried to include a varied range of vocabulary and structures. The quality of language was, however, often inconsistent, with frequent errors in the use of basic grammar e.g. singular/plural, adjectival and subject-verb agreements, articles, the use of the infinitive in two-verb structures and prepositions.

It is vitally important that candidates read the questions carefully before beginning to write their essays. Planning is a key element when writing a discursive essay and many candidates appear to bypass this important phase, writing a cursory few words in lieu of a plan, or nothing at all. It is advisable to write the plan in French as this gives the opportunity to test out vocabulary and structures. A lack of planning often leads to long rambling essays with poor punctuation and paragraphing. In some cases, candidates adopted an inappropriate register with slang words being used and candidates addressing the Examiner as *tu*.

Candidates who planned their essays carefully, defined the terms of the question and wrote a logical and persuasive argument, before arriving at a balanced conclusion, were most successful. They used a range of structures and idioms and convinced the reader with the coherence and relevance of their arguments.

Common errors included:

Des nos jours.

Étudier for enseigner

Anglicisms such as *distracter*; *improver*; *resolver*; *la balance*

Beaucoup des gens

C'est instead of *il est*: *c'est difficile de*; *c'est clair que*

Inappropriate use of *personnes/gens (certains gens)*

Confusion between: *ce/ces/ses/c'est, on/ont, et/est/ait/es, son/sont*

Gender errors: *la problème, la programme*

Misspellings of *conflict, l'internet, l'Instagram, le facebook*

Phonetic spelling e.g. *comme ont le voi de n'aux jours, l'internet à c'est bon côté*

The omission of *ne* in negative constructions

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

La communication est le meilleur moyen d'affronter le conflit des générations. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez ?

Most candidates considered the reasons for the generation gap, stating the use of technology by young people, differences of opinions, parents not keeping up with changes in attitude and values, and young people rebelling against parental authority. They tended to agree that communication is one of the best ways to bridge the gap, and that both sides need to listen to each other. Weaker answers, after stating that communication was far better than confrontation, had little more to say and ended up describing long personal anecdotes. These responses tended, therefore, to lack both subtlety and fresh insights. The best essays looked at other ways of bringing the generations together such as spending time together and sharing activities that both younger and older generations enjoy. They suggested that communication does not have to be verbal but can be through actions, and sometimes even, silence. Some candidates were keen to point out that parents' old-fashioned methods of imposing their authority were the cause of conflict and were definitely unacceptable in the modern world. The best answers were those that were able to demonstrate with clarity and style the need for compromise and understanding between the generations, using a range of examples.

Question 2

Manger n'est plus un plaisir parce qu'on doit toujours penser aux conséquences. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

Few candidates attempted this question. Several of them merely gave a list of food that is considered bad to eat, followed by a list of illnesses that could ensue such as diabetes and heart disease. They then suggested activities that could be done to offset over-indulgence and predisposition to illness. Other, more sophisticated responses discussed the increase in eating disorders and the impact of social media with its focus on celebrities, on perceptions of physical appearance, particularly amongst adolescent girls and young women. They also mentioned the high levels of obesity in many countries as well as the impact of genetically modified foods and processed food on people's health. Most agreed that with a balanced diet and regular exercise, people can enjoy what they eat without worrying about the consequences, and still enjoy occasional consumption of food considered to be unhealthy.

Question 3

Il faut que les filles et les garçons suivent le même programme scolaire. Êtes-vous d'accord ?

Only a handful of candidates attempted this question. For several of them, the question was about girls having the opportunity to attend school in the same way as boys, thus allowing them to access the job market and become independent of their families. It was clear to candidates that boys and girls have the same aptitudes and should, therefore, have the right to study the same subjects in school so they can have successful careers afterwards. Weaker answers merely defined education and described their own schools, while better answers discussed in detail the importance of equality and the need for schools to promote this in societies which might still be anchored in traditional roles for boys and girls. Some candidates made the point that schools might sometimes reasonably differentiate between boys and girls because of differing levels of maturity but that this differentiation should not relate to access to the same range of subjects.

Question 4

Il faut absolument limiter l'usage d'internet par les enfants. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

This was the most popular question and all candidates across the range of ability were able to make some relevant points about the impact of the internet on young people. Some candidates focused entirely on the advantages and disadvantages of the internet without making reference to limiting the usage except for a passing mention in the introduction or conclusion. It was clear that, during this year, when much of schooling has been conducted online, a limit on usage could be counterproductive. Candidates understood, though, that despite its obvious advantages as a research tool, a place to communicate with friends and family and to enjoy playing games, there are clear downsides to spending all one's time in the virtual world of the internet. They described the impact on physical health on being sedentary and the risk to the eyes of focusing on a screen all day. They also mentioned the dangers of cyberbullying, the theft of personal data and having access to inappropriate material on websites. It was felt that parental controls were important and that limits should be applied to daily use but that, overall, there should not be a complete ban on children using the internet as the benefits outweighed the risks.

Question 5

C'est notre dépendance au plastique qui mène à la destruction de la biodiversité marine. Que pensez-vous de cette affirmation ?

Not many candidates attempted this question. The most common approach was to list many of the ecological threats to the planet and man's share of the blame. These answers tended to miss the detail on marine biodiversity and our overuse of plastic. The best essays gave examples of how plastic can cause damage to the marine environment. They described the impact on the ocean bed and, specifically, on coral reefs, and the risks to sea creatures who inadvertently ingest plastic believing it to be food. Excess packaging and the careless disposal of plastics were seen to be the major causes of this marine disaster. Candidates often went on to describe other factors leading to destruction of the marine environment such as overfishing, oil spills and pollution. Their answers were illustrated with a good range of examples and displayed a considerable knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/33
Essay

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read the questions carefully and take sufficient time to plan their essays before starting to write. They then need to create logical, well-illustrated answers on the actual question set, beginning with a clear introduction to the topic and ending with a conclusion that does not merely state what went before. In order to attain top marks for language they need to have a good range of complex grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions at their disposal.

General comments

It was clear that most candidates had understood the rubric for the paper and essays were generally of the correct length, although a small number were very short. The candidates' work was generally clearly presented although there were some examples of poor handwriting. Most of the candidates did attempt a plan but it was often short, in list form and rather sketchy in content. The importance of planning is clear since unplanned answers tend to be poorly constructed and full of alterations. This leads to ideas being presented in a confused way, with no clear prioritisation. In weaker scripts, contradictions were common as candidates moved from one side of the argument to another without sufficient links. It is particularly important that essays should tackle the question set and not merely write about the overarching topic area (e.g. *La conservation*). This can lead to generic and sometimes pre-learned material being used, making it very difficult for candidates to access the higher mark bands.

Most candidates were able to build an argument, including a fair number of points. However, some essays were quite basic and repetitive in tone and lacked clear development and exemplification of points. At the upper end there were some responses which demonstrated a good knowledge of the topic area, focused on the terms of the question and expressed ideas in clear and accurate French using a range of structures. Weaker scripts showed frequent inconsistencies in the use of basic grammar, in particular the use of adjectival and subject-verb agreements. Many candidates also had difficulty with prepositions, possessive adjectives and pronouns. Successful responses were those that demonstrated clearly the ideas of the candidate using a range of complex structures and idioms with attention to detail of grammar and spelling. In these answers, introductions were clear and set out the parameters of the argument, paragraphing was good and conclusions were well judged.

Common errors included:

Frequent use of *beaucoup des* with plural noun and *cela* with plural verb.

Confusion between/misuse of : *ces/ses, les/des, place/endroit, bon/bien, mauvais/mal, c'est que/ceux que, ceux qui/ce qui, ou/où, a/à, mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs*.

The omission of *ne* in negative constructions.

Use of the wrong preposition after common verbs followed by an infinitive structure, e.g. *aider de, préférer de, sembler de, dépendre sur*,

Examples of candidates using one type of accent for all occurrences. Accents used randomly where not appropriate.

Des nos jours.

Difficulties with *bon/mauvais; bien/mal ; meilleur/pire*

Anglicisms : *la balance, balancer ; éventuellement ; actuellement*

C'est instead of *il est*: *c'est difficile ; c'est facile*

Use of *son/sa/ses* and *leur/leurs* : *les parents ne comprennent pas ses enfants ; l'adolescent et leurs parents*

Gender errors: *la domaine, la problème*

Misspellings of *le conflict, les societies; les celebreties; les avantages/desavantages ; les bénéfiques*

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Le conflit des générations augmente en grande partie à cause de la technologie. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

Most candidates who attempted this question agreed that technology has increased the gap between generations. They felt that young people spending too long on their devices was a major source of conflict in the home. They also felt that older people were out of their depth with technology and this just compounded the problem. Parents and grandparents also did not understand young people's interest in the use of social media and video games, and this regularly led to arguments. Candidates were keen to support the idea that technology is an essential part of today's world, both for entertainment and for learning (particularly in the time of the pandemic) and they believed that older people should try to understand this. The best essays argued that the generation gap existed long before technology became so prominent in people's lives and they referred to other problems which can also cause conflict such as adolescent mood swings, the desire for freedom and the move away from traditional values and traditions.

Question 2

De nos jours faire un régime est devenu une obsession. Discutez de cette affirmation ?

This question was attempted by few candidates. Answers tended to be quite general in nature, concentrating on the influence of social media on young people's attitude to food and dieting. Photos, advertisements and videos showing very thin models and celebrities were thought to be responsible for people's interest in dieting and physical appearance. The dangers inherent in this were apparent as it could lead to eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. Some candidates mentioned other reasons for following a diet such as an interest in general health and food quality. They included reference to gluten free and low carbohydrate diets which would allow people to avoid food allergies and some mentioned the dangers associated with GM foods. Candidates were not convinced that following a diet is a major obsession and they pointed out that the current rates of obesity worldwide would seem to prove that fact.

Question 3

C'est une perte de temps de faire des devoirs pour l'école à la maison. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

Most candidates could see the value of homework as a way of reinforcing learning done in school and as a way of revising before exams. They were, however, concerned that a good balance between study time and free time should be established. It was clear to candidates that too much homework can be detrimental to candidates' wellbeing and that there needs to be sufficient time to spend with their families and to enjoy their various hobbies and interests. The best scripts were able to analyse the types of homework given and suggest those that were the most useful e.g. personal projects requiring research. Repetitive copying tasks were criticised as being unhelpful. Homework was sometimes seen as an opportunity for candidates to reflect on work done in the noise and bustle of the classroom. Some candidates were even able to see it from the point of view of teachers who can use it as a tool to evaluate the work of their candidates and also their own teaching.

Question 4

La technologie a changé le monde pour le mieux. Êtes-vous d'accord ?

This was by far the most popular question and was attempted by candidates across the range. Most of them managed to look at both sides of the argument. Many took technology to be the internet, mobile phones and tablets. Those who took a broader view mentioned medical advances, easier communication across the world, robotisation of industry and opportunities to travel. All candidates recognised that there are many downsides to the growth of technology such as pollution, unemployment, cyberbullying and the misuse of developments such as nuclear weapons. They argued that technology has a greater beneficial impact on rich countries and has in fact, in many ways, increased the gap between the developed and the developing world. As an example, it was felt that the COVID-19 vaccine might be too expensive for poor countries. The overall conclusion was that that we are now totally reliant on technology and all it can bring us but that we should be mindful of how its rapid development can create problems as well as benefits.

Question 5

Les espèces animales et végétales sont essentielles pour la survie de l'humanité. Qu'en pensez-vous ?

Not many candidates attempted this question. The best responses concentrated on the concept of the food chain and the interdependence of species. They spoke about the need for trees to provide oxygen, insects to pollinate and animals to provide meat for human consumption. They also mentioned the use of plants in the creation of drugs to help in curing or palliating disease. Some candidates felt that humanity might be able to manage without animals and plants in the future as GM foods and laboratory-grown meat products would obviate the need for widespread agriculture. Synthetic drugs could also be created in the laboratory. Most candidates were able to describe many ways in which we are dependent on animals and plants for our survival and felt, therefore, that we should do our best to ensure the health of the environment and the conservation of species.